



# **Peter Barnes Wildlife Preserve Commission**

**216 Amboy Avenue, Metuchen NJ 08840**

**Edison Township Public Meeting – March 16, 2023, 7:00 pm**

**Location: Edison Municipal Chambers**

Commissioners: Dorothy Rasmussen, Chair; Walter Stochel, Vice Chair; Ken Sammond, Secretary; Tom Walsh, Bob Diehl, Bob Spiegel. John Wiley, Legal Counsel

Public: Milton Fowler, Glenn Johnson, Bruce Diamond, Joe Cervelli, David Weintraub, Tom White, Sally Yabra, Maria Orchid, Doriann Kerber Anne and Mike Kruimer, Jack Barnes, Laura Uhlig-Smith, Samir Geiger, Esther Barcun.

Chair Dorothy Rasmussen welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7:08

Each of the commissioners introduced themselves.

Walter Stochel conducted the slideshow presentation of the Master Plan.

Bob Spiegel discussed the size of the Woodbrook Superfund site, noting that it is about 66 acres. The cost calculation for the cleanup has gone from around \$25 million to about \$50 million. Design is complete and ready to go. It is the preferred remedy of complete remediation. He argued that the cleanup is largely contingent upon the adoption of the master plan.

Walter state that there is other contamination, including the Gulton site, which is being remediated.

Bob Spiegel that other sites in the preserve or near it include the Oliver Brown Rubber Co., Tingley Rubber, and the Orthopesticide Co. on Metuchen Rd. He also stated that the EPA cleanup in is continuing in South Plainfield (Cornell Dubilier), focusing on the brook out through Market Pond, stating that the fish are among most contaminated with PCBs.

Walter added that there are also a couple of cars and a boat dumped in the preserve.

Bob Spiegel stated that we should do a wildlife inventory after the Master Plan is adopted. He pointed out that beavers are back for the first time in 100 years.

Joe Cervelli state that birds, including eagles, are eating fish in the brook, which may present other problems.

Bob Spiegel state that such is why the larger entity, the Barnes Commission, is helpful. He pointed out that the cleanup focus improved when the Edison Wetlands Association pushed the cleanup and got the EPA to spend \$\$, about \$50 million....changing the level of cleanup. He argued that collective groups and residential involvement will only make it better. He stated that we could get the EPA to come and address the efforts of the communities.

Joe Cervelli asked how we will make the public aware of the plans and work of the Barnes Commission going forward.

Dorothy stated that once the Master Plan is approved, we can set up regular meetings that the public can attend. We may have quarterly meetings as well as when there is a need to entertain an zoning application or other work.

Bob Spiegel stated that after S. Plainfield meeting and approval of the Master Plan, we could have the EPA come and present to the public.

Dorothy R. confirmed that an EPA presentation would be helpful.

Board member LWRP: What types of signage?

Walter: We have marked the Songbird Trail using aluminum signs on trees. Also, commissioner Tomaro created two large signs designating the Barnes Preserve.

Board member LWRP about water restoration and if there is yet a cleanup plan?

Walter S stated not yet.

Bob Spiegel mentioned that the Triple C will be opening later this year.

Bruce Diamond asked how private property owners would deal with zoning issues, would they go to municipalities or to the Barnes Commission?

Dorothy stated that the municipalities passed resolutions agreeing to turn over this power to the Barnes Commission.

Walter emphasized that cooperation between partners has been excellent.

Glasses and red (Mike Kruimer) : So I'm familiar with D & R. so I understand.

Bob Spiegel state that the county has purchased a variety of properties. Township using building for public works, but it is supposed to be designated for nature purposes. Would be a good Jane Tousman center for nature.

Walter stated that the late Senator, Peter Barnes, referred to the Delaware and Raritan Canal, Meadowlands, Pinelands, and Highlands commissions when he considered what should be done with the land that is now the Barnes Preserve.

Joe Cervelli asked how we plan on cleaning up the trash in the preserve and how we will deal with it in the future.

Walter stated that there will be cooperation with the commission and county and municipalities to snure that we can send someone out there on a consistent basis.

Bob Spiegel stated that Edison Township has garbage and recycling cans at either end of Songbird Trail.

Walter stated that there will be a cleanup on the Songbird Trail on March 25, 2023

Ken stated that there will be a cleanup and invasive strike team effort at the Opalanie Trail on April 15, 2023.

Jack Barnes asked what the commission's action plans are...beyond what has been stated

John Wiley stated that we will create a watershed plan and zoning ordinances. He stated that the commission does not own the land, so we have to ask the towns.

Joe Cervelli asked where the funding for the commission comes from.

Dorothy stated that we have a DCA grant from the state.

Bob Spiegel said that community members can give us input and ideas.

Tom Walsh stated that people can email comments and suggestions to [Barnespreserve@gmail.com](mailto:Barnespreserve@gmail.com).

David Weintraub observed that there was still a problem with trespassing with ATVs. How does the commission handle it?

Walter pointed out that much of that happens on the railroad property, which we do not own. He recommended calling the police.

Bob Sp.: we explain to offenders that it is an archaeological site and they are better behaved.

Walter: since Edison Wetlands Association has been on Tyler Road, we have had significant drop in ATV use near there.

Dorothy asked if there were any more comments?

Dorothy made a motion to close the meeting. Walter seconded. All commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 PM.